[Press release: UK takes key step towards fair new fishing policy after Brexit](#)

The United Kingdom will take an historic step towards delivering a fairer deal for the UK fishing industry this week by triggering the withdrawal from an arrangement that allowed foreign countries access to UK waters, Environment Secretary Michael Gove confirmed today.

As part of moves to prepare the UK for the opportunities of leaving the European Union, the Government will officially begin withdrawal from the London Fisheries Convention.

The London Fisheries Convention, signed in 1964 before the UK joined the European Union, allows vessels from five European countries to fish within six and 12 nautical miles of the UK's coastline. It sits alongside the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), which allows all European vessels access between 12 and 200 nautical miles of the UK and sets quotas for how much fish each nation can catch.

On Monday the UK will notify the other Member States signed up to the London Fisheries Convention, triggering a two-year withdrawal period – in a similar way to the Article 50 letter which began a two-year withdrawal from the EU.

Securing a fairer deal for the UK fishing industry is a Manifesto pledge and one of the Government's key objectives for Brexit.

When we leave the EU, we will no longer be bound by the Common Fisheries Policy but without action, restrictions under the historic London Fisheries Convention would still apply. By withdrawing from the London Fisheries Convention we will no longer be bound by the existing access agreements.

Instead we will regain control of fishing access to our waters and become fully responsible for the management of fisheries so we can ensure a fair, sustainable and profitable industry for all our fishermen.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

> Leaving the London Fisheries Convention is an important moment as we take back control of our fishing policy. It means for the first time in more than fifty years we will be able to decide who can access our waters.
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> This is an historic first step towards building a new domestic fishing policy as we leave the European Union – one which leads to a more competitive, profitable and sustainable industry for the whole of the UK.

As announced in the Queen's Speech, the Government will introduce a [Fisheries Bill](#) to control access to the UK's waters and set fishing quotas once we have left the EU. This is supplemented by our decision to leave the London Fisheries Convention.

Working closely with our neighbours, the Government will design a new fishing policy which allows the fishing industry and coastal communities to thrive, in line with our international obligations, as we build a deep and special partnership with the European Union after Brexit.

Barrie Deas, Chief Executive of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations, said:

> This is welcome news and an important part of establishing the UK as an independent coastal state with sovereignty over its own exclusive economic zone.

The fisheries sector contributes £1.3 billion to the economy, employing 34,600 people. There were over 6,000 UK fishing vessels in 2015, which landed 708,000 tonnes of fish – worth £775 million.

An estimated 10,000 tonnes of fish, including mackerel and herring, was caught by fishing vessels from the London Fisheries Convention countries France, Belgium, Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands in 2015 within 12 nautical miles of the British coast – worth an estimated £17 million.

In the coming months and years, the government will be working with the industry and marine scientists, as well as the devolved administrations, to preserve and increase fish stocks for their long-term sustainability, and secure prosperity for fishermen across the UK when we leave the European Union.

Starting this summer, there will be a period of engagement on the Fisheries Bill with the devolved administrations, fishermen, trade organisations, fish processors and the public to make sure we deliver a deal that works for the whole of the UK.